

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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IO-10 EUR-12 ACDA-05 AID-05 /086 W

----- 028884

R 051500Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2850

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF, SY

SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP MEDIA COVERAGE OF ASAD'S FEB 26 SPEECH TO SYRIAN
STUDENT UNION CONFERENCE

REF: DAMASCUS 0711

1. DAMASCUS MEDIA HAVE CONTINUED TO PLAY PROMINENTLY
KEYNOTES OF PRESIDENT ASAD'S FEB 26 ADDRESS (REPORTED
BY FBIS), PARTICULARLY HIS ASSERTION THAT "MOST FUNDAMENTAL
FACTOR IN PEACE PROCESS...IS NOT GOLAN OR SINAI; IT
IS THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" AND HIS
STATEMENT: "I WANT THE GOLAN IN FULL. I WANT SINAI
IN FULL. I ALSO WANT COMPLETE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN
PEOPLE. PEACE IS NOT DECIDED BY DAMASCUS OR CAIRO
BUT BY THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE."

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2. FEB 28 ISSUES OF AL-BAATH AND AL-THAWRAH CLAIMED

SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT IN OTHER ARAB CAPITALS FOR ASAD'S SPEECH. AL-THAWRAH'S EDITOR ALI SULAYMAN ASSERTED THAT RATHER THAN BECOMING ABSORBED IN FORMULAS, IT WAS NECESSARY TO GET TO CORE OF PROBLEM, WHICH IS NON-SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. ANY ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN PEACE IN AREA WILL FAIL AND LEAD TO A NEW EXPLOSION UNLESS PALESTINIAN ISSUE IS SOLVED.

3. MARCH 1 AL-THAWRAH KEPT ASAD'S THEMES BEFORE PUBLIC WITH COLUMN THAT COMPARED SLOGANS OF POST-1967 PERIOD-- "TERMINATING TRACES OF AGGRESSION" -- AND OF POST-1973 WAR PERIOD -- "LIBERATING ARAB LANDS OCCUPIED IN 1967" -- WITH WHAT IT SAYS SHOULD BE CURRENT SLOGAN -- "RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK, ARTICLE ASSERTS, NEITHER DAMASCUS NOR CAIRO CAN DETERMINE ELEMENTS OF PEACE SETTLEMENT, BUT MUST COORDINATE THEIR ACTIONS WITH PALESTINIANS. COLUMNIST ENDS WITH RENEWED CALL FOR ARAB POLITICAL UNITY, SAYING "THE VICTORY THAT WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH UNITED MILITARY ACTION IN OCTOBER WAR MUST BE ACHIEVED AGAIN THROUGH UNITED POLITICAL ACTION. THIS IS ONLY ROAD TO PEACE."

4. EDITOR FALHUT'S COLUMN IN MARCH 3 AL-BAATH GAVE EQUAL WEIGHT TO LIBERATION OF ALL ARAB LANDS AND TO RECOVERY OF ALL RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. HE ALSO STRESSED NECESSITY FOR ARAB SOLIDARITY AS WELL AS ARAB READINESS MAKE MORE SACRIFICES.

5. COMMENT: SYRIAN CHARACTERIZATION OF PALESTINIAN ASPECTS OF M.E. PROBLEM AS MORE CENTRAL THAN EITHER GOLAN OR SINAI IS NOT NEW. ITS LATEST REEMPHASIS UNDERSCORES ASSESSMENT OF SYRIANS THAT THEY AND PALESTINIANS SHARE IMMEDIATE COMMON INTEREST -- NOT TO PERMIT EGYPT TO ENTER A STAGE-TWO SETTLEMENT WITHOUT TAKING THEIR INTERESTS INTO ACCOUNT AS WELL.
MURPHY

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